



Top 20 Catering Trends for 2015

In this eBook, we look at upcoming catering trends as predicted by two of the industry's leading catering firms, Four Five One Events and Windows Catering.

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Four Five One Events - the International Catering Association CATIE Award winner for Best Caterer of 2014 - specializes in creative menus and unique event ambiance that make a lasting impression on their clients. “As the economy improves, people are prepared to make more of an impact on their guests,” explained Four Five One Events’s co-owner Ingrid Nagy. “We don’t think inside the box. Our creative team literally sits down, throws ideas onto a dartboard, and then see what sticks. Everyone is raising their expectations.”

We asked their Event Services Manager Stuart Holden to tell us the ten trends that are steering the company into 2015.

Holden predicts that edible installations and Table to Farm events will be the talk of the industry, amongst 8 other trends that he and the team at Four Five One Events believe will drive the soul of their industry through the end of 2015.





Caterers Will Think Outside The Glass

Using creative vessels for serving cocktails puts a spin on the traditional and elevates the experience. Milk cartons or glass, individual tumblers, mercury glass and mason jars are just a sampling of the selection you can deploy as alternatives to the drab drinking glass.

Edible Art Installations

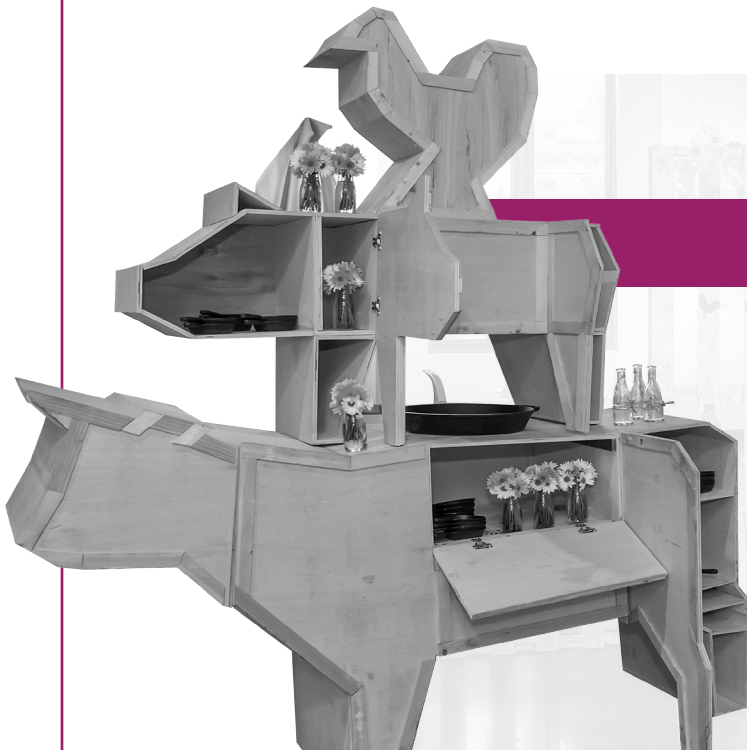
Artists have been creating installations for galleries for years. Now interactive food installations serve as décor for events. At a recent event, Four Five One Events created a wall of blue and pink ombre donuts. Guests plucked their preferred pastry from the wall, and were immediately offered a champagne flute of ice-cold milk to wash it down. Making food an experience makes it memorable.





Technology Influenced Design

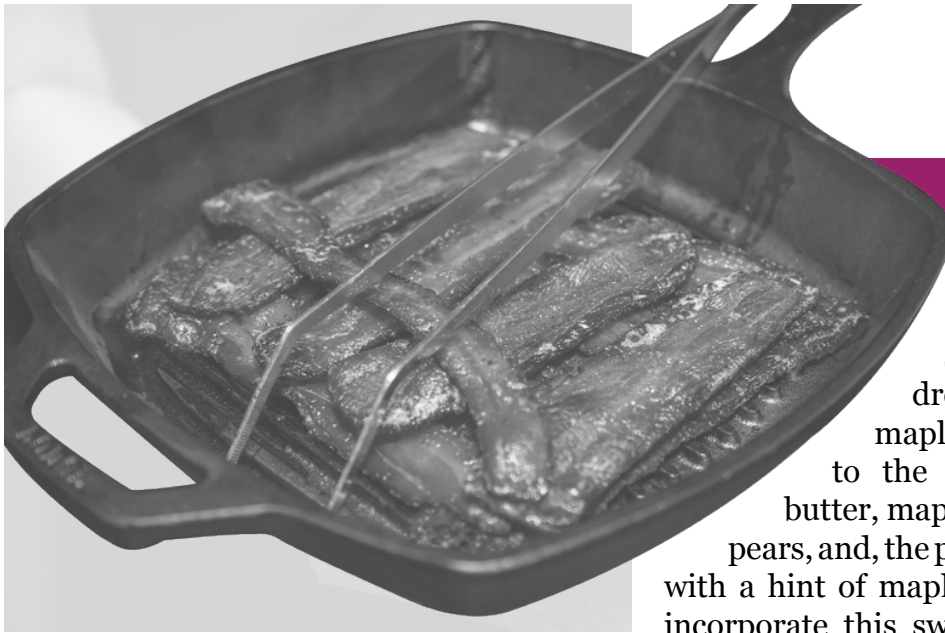
Incorporating social media builds excitement about the event and gets the office talking which boosts attendance. With a little help from the web you can display these social media happenings in real time at the event and continue the party after the event has ended.



Reverse Trend: Table To Farm

The farm to table concept has gained so much popularity (a Feb. 2014 Successful Meetings survey found 80 percent of respondents around the country saying they routinely offer locally sourced meats and seafood to meeting attendees), but it's time for a twist! Now it's about taking the table to the farm and 'shipping' in animals along with it. Incorporating serving vessels such as miniature cast iron skillets or glass milk jugs add an extra special touch.





Make It Maple

From cocktails infused with maple to salads with syrup in the dressing, it's a little hint of maple that connects guests to the season. Maple-whiskey butter, maple and cardamom spiced pears, and, the proverbial favorite, bacon with a hint of maple. If your event doesn't incorporate this sweet treat, you probably need to go back to the drawing board.

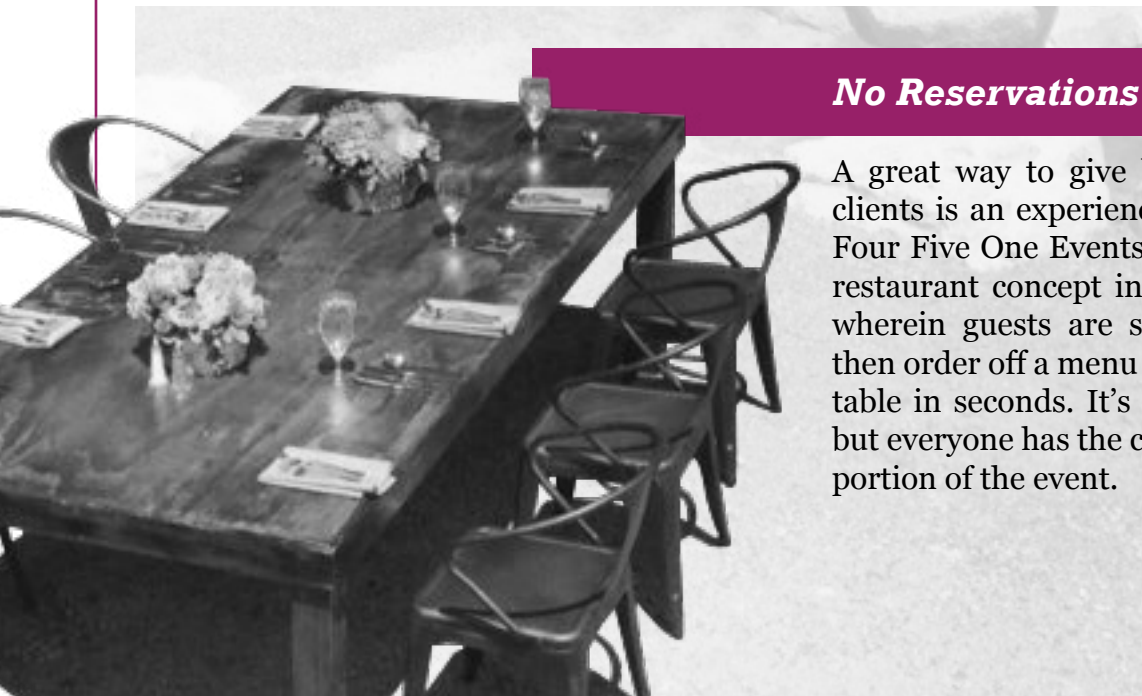
Entertainment as Decor

Incorporating interactive entertainment that ties to the food makes the experience appeal to all five senses. The inspired team of Four Five One Events created this DJ booth out of traditional kitchenware at a recent event. Consider how human decor, musical inspiration and technology can enhance the simplicity of a standard buffet.



Game Changer: Local “Raw” Bar

From carpaccio's to crudités, Holden implores you to ditch your traditional expectations of a raw bar, and consider the local, fresh choices available to you in “raw” form. Four Five One Event's Senior Event Designer Deirdre Wildman says, “There is a huge focus on locally sourced, locally grown, healthful, gluten free, hyper-local sourcing, sustainable farming and farm/estate branded items.” Creative concepts such as stalks of white asparagus nestled near fresh white roses and thyme are one example of making the ordinary raw bar extraordinary.



No Reservations Allowed for VIPs

A great way to give back to employees or clients is an experience that feels exclusive. Four Five One Events likes to incorporate a restaurant concept into their larger events, wherein guests are seated by the hostess, then order off a menu and are served at their table in seconds. It's like a VIP experience, but everyone has the chance to be a VIP for a portion of the event.



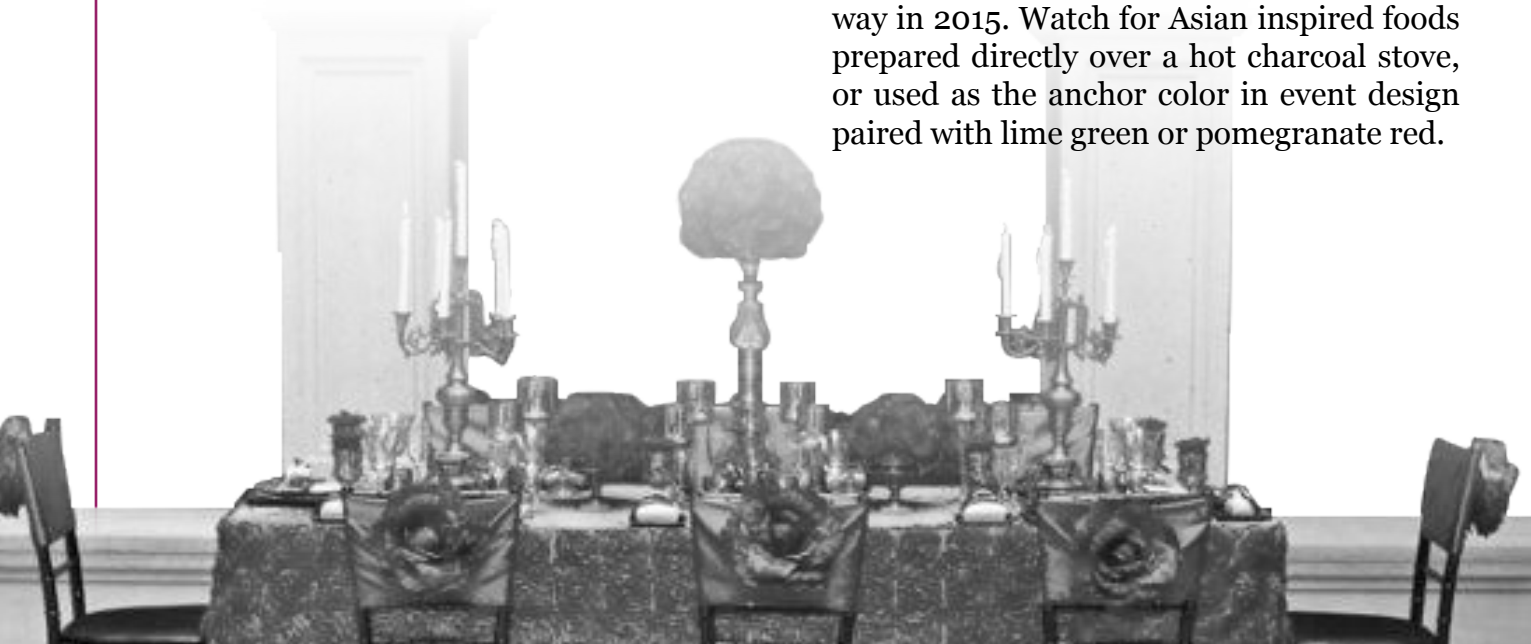
Creative Solutions to Seating

Ditch traditional banquet tables and chairs for furniture vignettes that create comfort and joy. With the plethora of seating options available to the modern planner - rocking chairs, serpentine sofas, porch swings, mod ball chairs, distressed metal loveseats - clients in 2015 will longer accept the option of a folding or banquet chair.



Charcoal Off the Grill

Charcoal is the color of the season, and it will be used in more than the traditional way in 2015. Watch for Asian inspired foods prepared directly over a hot charcoal stove, or used as the anchor color in event design paired with lime green or pomegranate red.





Windows Catering Company, one of Washington D.C.'s premier off-premise caterers, has established a nationally acclaimed reputation for designing and executing flawless, memorable events. The 2 Star Certified Green Restaurant company is renowned for their signature customer service and inventiveness, serving clients such as the National Portrait Gallery, the Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium and the National Building Museum.

Windows CEO Andrew Gerstel believes that the coming year will usher in a renowned interest in small bites, while predicting that palates will expand to welcome speciality foods like Pink Himalayan salt. Flip the page to learn all of his predictions for a delicious 2015.

Farm to Fork

Farm to Table is as commonplace a term now as a tasting menu, but look for the most innovative catering teams to focus on showcasing the spirit of the appellations (regions) that they are harvested from. Think farm-fresh, brilliantly hued vegetables, edible flowers and raw, white asparagus bundles.



Not Your Average Mini Bite

Food presentation is just as important as the ingredients within your dishes. Innovative caterers will take standard fare such as a soup shot and make it a visual masterpiece by pairing it with a perfectly cut tea sandwich. Watch as gazpacho and shrimp, English Pea and cucumber, or yellow tomato paired with olive prosciutto sandwiches become popular.

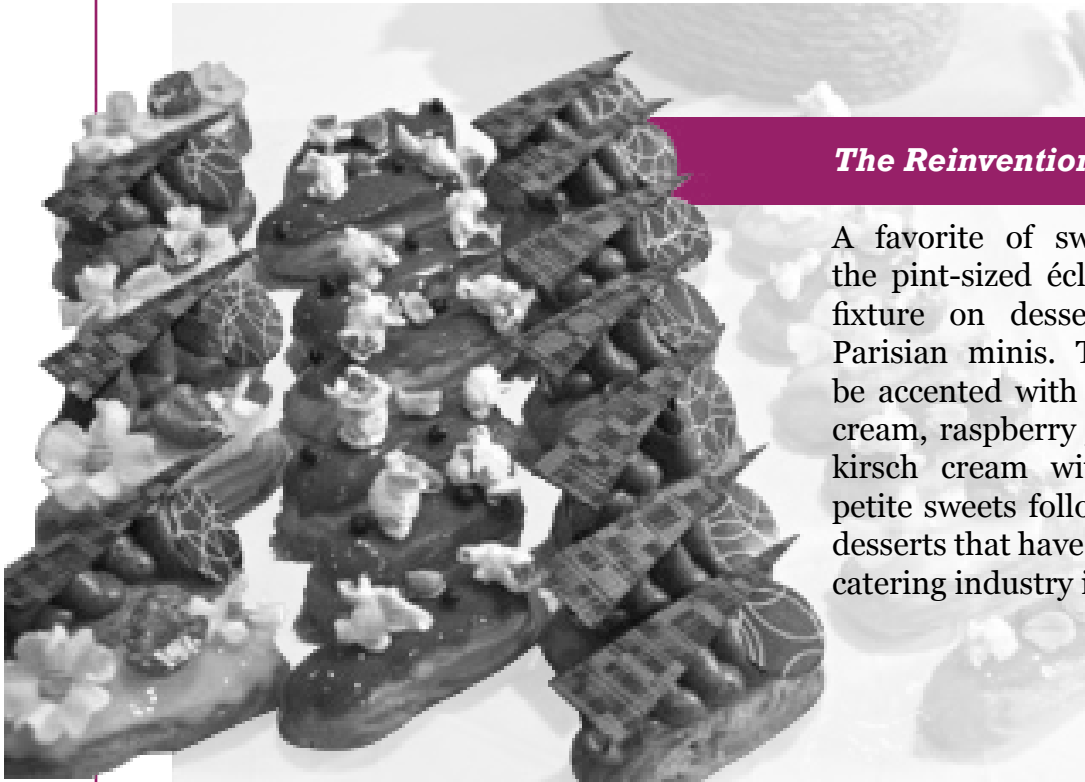
Pink Himalayan Salt

Protected from pollution and impurities by the Himalayan mountain range in Pakistan, Pink Himalayan salt is considered to be the purest in the world. Watch for Pink Himalayan salt as an ingredient, as well as for design purposes, such as this display which hosts giant sea scallops, sashimi tuna, wild salmon, carpaccio of black Angus beef and an array of organic vegetables, daikon and red icicle radish.



Savory Cupcakes

Kitchens will take the bite-sized foods craze to new levels by finding new ways to showcase their creativity with small, savory fare. If you've never seen a mini country meatloaf cupcake topped with a creamy whipped potato top and roasted mushroom gravy, you won't be missing out for long.

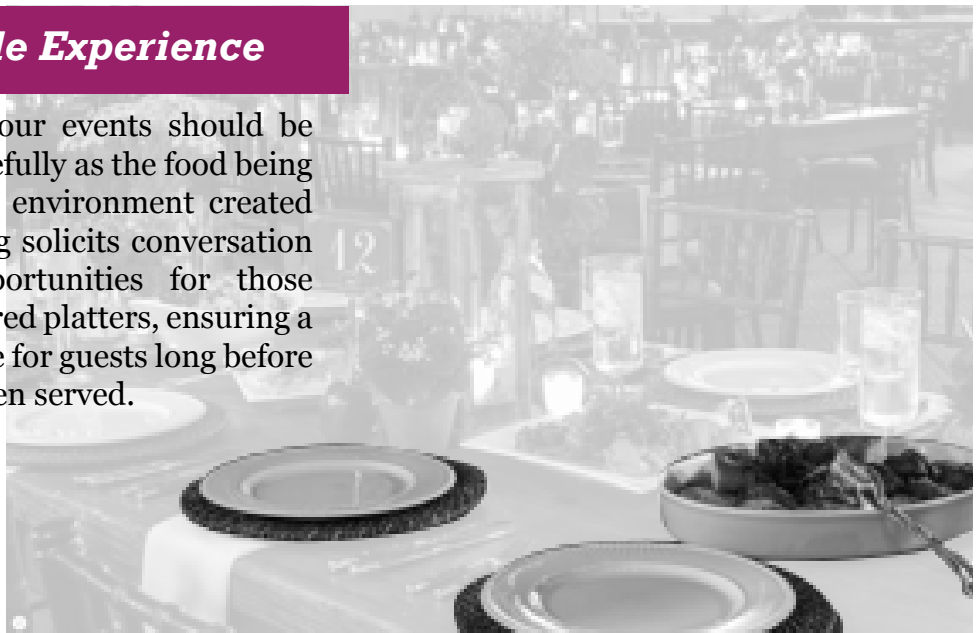


The Reinvention of Bite-Sized Desserts

A favorite of sweets lovers for decades, the pint-sized éclair will become a regular fixture on dessert rotations, flanked by Parisian minis. The delicate pastries will be accented with fillings like peanut butter cream, raspberry jelly, vanilla chantilly and kirsch cream with candied fruits. These petite sweets follow the trend for bite-sized desserts that have carved a niche place in the catering industry in recent years

The Family-Style Experience

The atmosphere of your events should be considered just as carefully as the food being served. The energetic environment created by Family-Style dining solicits conversation and networking opportunities for those seated around the shared platters, ensuring a memorable experience for guests long before the first course has been served.



Old World BBQ

Traditional barbeque will fight for the spotlight with Asian-inspired beef for diners in 2015 as the comfort dish trend gains popularity. Look for items like Korean barbecued beef short ribs accented with an Asian pear, toasted garlic and sesame soy marinade with seasoned spinach and bean sprouts.



Savory and Sweet

Combining sweet and savory has long been a popular food trend, but expect it to be taken to the next level in 2015 with menu concepts such as raspberry macaroons filled with pate de Foie Gras, bourbon bacon jam, or vegetable soft serve (think carrot yogurt).





Comfort Dishes

Devilish comfort foods are hard to resist, even for the most health-minded diners. Menu items such as Big Tex barbecue with cheesy corn bake, baked potato salad, and apple cinnamon strudel will solicit an array of justifications for their consumption as guests water at the mouth for a taste of these traditionally heavy offerings.

Dessert Parfaits

Continuing the dessert craze will be the explosion of parfaits that delight and surprise. Passion fruit and Jivara milk chocolate parfaits and coconut cake, mango jelly and chocolate cream are the sweet concoctions the team at Windows are most excited to present in 2015.



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